

What Is Environmental Responsibility?



**FIND OUT
MORE
ONLINE**

FTC Green Guides



**FIND OUT
MORE
ONLINE**

Summary of FTC
Green Guides



How Does It Affect Me?

Clients are increasingly aware of their social and environmental responsibilities—and they expect you to be fully versed in the subject as well. By embracing these expectations and delivering, you have the opportunity to differentiate yourself from the competition.

Environmental responsibility is just smart business. Increasingly, your target audience wants assurances that products comply with environmental, social and product safety regulations and standards.

When regulations exist, compliance is required by law. It is vital that you communicate frankly with your promotional products client to ensure you select the right product for their specific application.

The terms “green” or “eco-friendly” are difficult to define because they are subjective. Marketers use these terms to represent attributes of products, so the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has stepped in to better define them. In 2010, the FTC proposed revisions to its existing “Green Guides” and the revisions were formalized in October 2012. The FTC works for consumers to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices and to provide information to help spot, stop and avoid them. The Green Guides aid marketers in presenting products in a way that protects consumers, clients and companies.



What is a children’s product?

- A consumer product designed or intended primarily for use by children 12 years of age or younger
- Products intended for this group require compliance to stricter standards and tests for certain chemicals such as lead, phthalates and product labeling



**FIND OUT
MORE
ONLINE**

Full list of NERC
member states

Where Do I Start?

Work with your client and be sure to ask him or her:

- Who is the intended audience of your campaign?
- Will or could the items be distributed to children?
(If yes, refer to PPAI communication document “What is compliance?”).
- Do your preferred products have child-like appeal or playful elements?
(If yes, refer to PPAI communication document “What is compliance?”).
- Where will the product be distributed? NERC states? California?
- How does your audience view environmental and sustainability issues?
- Does your company have an environmental or sustainability policy?
- Does your business sector have environmental and sustainability expectations?
- Would you consider looking at environmentally friendly/sustainable products?
If yes, continue with:
 - Is the product needed?
 - Is the product under consideration made from only one material?
 - Can parts that wear out (i.e. batteries, refills, etc.) be easily replaced?
 - If the product uses batteries, do you have a battery disposal plan?
 - How will the products be distributed?
 - Where will the products be distributed?
 - What kind of logo do you intend to use?



NERC

A non-profit organization that conducts research, hands-on projects, training, and outreach on issues associated with source reduction, recycling, composting, environmentally preferable purchasing, and decreasing the toxicity of the solid waste stream.



California Prop 65

The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986. Prop 65 is a national issue. Even when the entire distribution chain is based outside California, if even one promotional item failing to meet the restrictions imposed by the law ships to California, all involved—suppliers, promotional consultants and end buyers—are potentially liable under the terms of Prop 65 depending on the circumstances.



FIND OUT MORE ONLINE

Visit PPAI's Environmental Responsibility Page

What Do I Do Next?

Share responses with your supplier and ask:

- Are you familiar with the FTC Green Guides?
- Are there any environmentally responsible alternatives to manufacturing this product?
- Can you provide a bill of materials (Certificate of Conformity, MSDS, etc.)?

Have you conducted factory audits related to manufacturing, social responsibility and environmental sustainability? Do you provide lab testing?

- Does the product comply with regulatory requirements (environmental/product/social)?
- Is the product compliant with the sustainability efforts of the audience as shared?
- What are your environmental responsibility and sustainability efforts? How are they articulated?
- Do you have materials for buyers that explain your claims?
- Do you have a product buy-back policy or post-consumer materials reclamation program?

How Do I Demonstrate My Expertise In This Area?

Now that you've decided to embrace the environmental approach you will need to ask yourself these questions:

- What is the perceived value of the items you are offering? Do you offer alternatives, even if more costly, that have better environmental or sustainability claims?
- Have you studied the FTC Green Guides?
- Can your business claim/promote any environmental or sustainability credentials?
- Do you know what materials are recycled in your community?
- Do you know what materials are recycled in your customer's community?
- Are you offering distribution programs that can increase use of the item by the recipient and reduce waste?
- Do you offer advice on what your customer can do with unused or obsolete materials?
- Does the promotion you are suggesting include excessive waste?
- Have you considered how far the product travels from point of production, and are you prepared to offer an alternative manufacturer closer to point of use?

By asking your customer and your supplier the right questions, you can ensure that you have the right product for the right audience. You'll differentiate yourself from the competition by delivering memorable, engaging and sustainable solutions.